

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

April 19, 2001 LB 598

CLERK: I have a quorum present, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Mr. Clerk, the afternoon's business.

CLERK: Mr. President, when the Legislature recessed, pending was LB 598, and pending to that was AM1528, as offered by Senator Thompson. (Legislative Journal page 1542.)

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Further debate on AM1528. Senator Suttle.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature. I've been talking all morning about mostly the problem with girls and the lack of services for girls and their unique problems because I'm worried about where they're going to go and where the department is going to place them, if this bill passes, when there are...there's very few, if any, services for girls out there. I also hear through the grapevine that just girls are against this so it's...it's...it's silly of us to continue this, because we're just women and what do we know? That's my point. Whenever we have concerns or whenever we show any kind of opinion on anything it's usually dismissed out of hand because of our gender; seems somewhat unfair. Societal factors for girls and boys are different. And one of the things that we have to worry about are teen pregnancies, and mostly we have to worry about woman who have...who are pregnant, because they're the only ones that can be. Often the outcome of early sexual experimentation creates special needs for both the adolescent mother and her child. For the young mother, parenthood at an age may interfere with the normal challenges of adolescence, such as identity development; she doesn't even know who she is, let alone be able to teach her child who she or he is. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school, limiting their future chances for employment and increasing the likelihood that they'll live in poverty and become pregnant again within a year of their first birth. The child of a teen parent is vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Children of teen mothers are twice as likely to become victims of child abuse and neglect as children of adult mothers. Because at least 70 percent of the girls in the justice system have a history of